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Art & Design

Time Out Chicago / Issue 148 : Dec 27, 2007-Jan 2, 2008
Best of 2007

Best new permanent exhibition space
Spertus Museum's "depot"

Curators of this 15,000-piece Judaica collection came up with a genius idea: display a portion of their treasures behind 16-foot-tall, floor-to-ceiling glass walls in a semicircular room that "embraces" viewers. This ninth-floor walk-in jewel box—designed by Krueck + Sexton Architects, the creative team behind Spertus' smashing new building on South Michigan Avenue—holds about 1,000 objects, from suspended antique temple lamps to silver Passover goblets displayed on glass shelves.



FOILED AGAIN Rudolf Stingel democratized the MCA's walls.

Best use of materials not found in an art supply shop
Rudolf Stingel at Museum of Contemporary Art

The Italian artist showed us a few things about painting (and we are not talking about his photorealistic self-portraits), from the glow-casting wall-to-wall orange carpet in one cavernous gallery to the enormous Styrofoam panels (mottled after he walked on them in boots dipped in acid) hanging on the walls. For this show, curated by Francesco Bonami, Stingel hung a glam chandelier in the entry and lined the walls with foil-covered insulation board on which viewers were encouraged to draw, write, puncture, scratch and embed stuff.

Best ad campaign
Chicago Arts District's "Soho in Chicago," Podmajersky Inc.

Or the worst. It's certainly the most honest. In the '70s and '80s, Soho was filled with artist studios and art galleries; then came the chain stores and luxury condos. Maybe Pilsen can be both, maybe not.

Best aural attack
Allora and Calzadilla: Wake Up at Renaissance Society
 This sculptural installation by Puerto Rico-based artists Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla included a sound and light component—ten variations of reveille (the military bugle call) by contemporary musicians. Computer-programmed lights pulsed, dimmed or flashed to the sounds. It was the bomb.

Best use of tubers
Rodney Graham at Donald Young
 The Canadian artist paid homage to an incident involving Pink Floyd's drummer during a long jam session. In his short film "Lobbing Potatoes at a Gong," Graham reenacts this rock performance dressed as he imagines artist Dan Graham might have been at the time (plaid shirt, jeans and Red Wing work boots)...had he been inclined to lob potatoes at a gong.

Best return of a native son
Siebren Versteeg's Press Enter to Exit at Rhona Hoffman Gallery
 The now New York-based digital-media artist packed the house for his recent solo exhibition. Versteeg's work will be represented at the Hirshhorn Museum in February.

Best writing on the wall
Danielle Gustafson-Sundell's it's midnight and i'm lonely at Kavi Gupta Gallery
 These slogans (made with scraps of felt, denim and wool) are a sloppy cross between Jenny Holzer and Anni Albers, but they make up in spirit what they lack in precision.

Best blast from the past
Big Picture: A New View of Painting in Chicago, Chicago History Museum
 Drawn from the archives and private collections, the show was curated by John Corbett and Jim Dempsey and included cityscapes (like Jim Lute's Goodbye Milwaukee Avenue, 1987), and a 1958 mural from the Gold Coast Leather Bar.

—Ruth Lopez

Most viewed in Art & Design

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6. "Everyday People"
7. Amy Jean Porter
8. "Three Hours Between Planes"
9. Splat's entertainment
10. Boy crazy

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Published on 6/13/08
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